

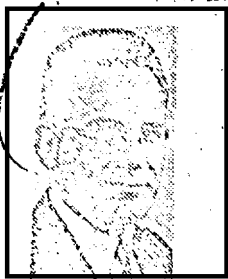
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NEWS FOCUS

On Washington

WASHINGTON—Speculation on President Johnson's appointments has proven to be risky but heavy rumors in informed circles have it now that he intends shortly to appoint Gen. Maxwell Taylor as director of the Central Intelligence Agency. The present director, Adm. William Raborn, has not proved to be well-suited for the job and Taylor has had an office in the White House but little to do since he returned from Saigon last summer. President John F. Kennedy wanted Taylor to take over the CIA after the Bay of Pigs in 1961 but the general became his military adviser instead. Mr. Johnson apparently feels he needs a prestige name in the CIA job now and Taylor fits the bill.

Soviet-Peking Status

THE UNITED STATES has been bombing the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos regularly but the Soviets took no notice of the treaty violation until a South Vietnamese official asserted in the press that the raids were taking place. The Russians immediately protested. The Saigon official explained that he had been misquoted and nothing more has been heard of the matter. The Russians are known to be preparing to end the policy of superficial courtesy toward the Red Chinese which has persisted since Nikita Khrushchev's ouster. The Kremlin reportedly feels that it is time to let Soviet criticisms of Peking's policies be known and the party congress next month is expected to concentrate on condemning them.

Victory For Rusk

MR. JOHNSON has apparently decided to lessen the importance of his National Security Council apparatus after McGeorge Bundy

leaves on March 1. His reported decision is to keep the small staff of professionals whom Bundy will leave behind in the White House but to restore the basic initiative in foreign policy to the State Department. This is a major victory for Sec. Dean Rusk who tried to short-circuit the Bundy operation when Mr. Johnson became President. Many question however whether Rusk has the instinct or the temperament to perform the co-ordinating functions which have been carried out by Bundy for the past five years.

LBJ Keeps 'Em Guessing

THE SUDDEN DECISION by Mr. Johnson to fly to Honolulu denoted his deepening disposition to keep his personal movements uncertain until the last possible moment. Sponsors of such affairs as the recent memorial service to Lal Bahadur Shastri have been unable to secure any advance notice on whether Mr. Johnson planned to attend. It is not known if this practice is prompted by security or personal convenience but it keeps his aides on their toes because presidential movements involve elaborate preparations. It is known that two personal reasons for Mr. Johnson's trip to Hawaii were his distaste for the snow which has blanketed Washington and his anxiety to meet Gen. William Westmoreland. The two had never met.

African Policy Shift

SPURRED by business complaints that G. Mennen Williams and his African affairs bureau of the State Department were too activist in their approach to the Rhodesian crisis, President Johnson has turned control of the U.S. role over to Thomas Mann, the Texan who now heads the department's economics branch. Williams' team had main-

ained that the rebel government must be brought down quickly to preserve peace in Africa. Some now say that the Smith regime may be able to stand for at least a year and Williams does not appear to have any voice in the situation.

GOP Strategy

THE GOP Congressional Campaign Committee wants to encourage the nomination of appealing candidates to challenge Democrats in marginal districts without letting it be said that the selection was dictated from Washington. The committee is pursuing this objective by telling Republican leaders in these districts that their strategists will contribute as much as \$20,000 to a candidate if they feel that he is capable of making a strong race. The House Republicans believe their campaign nest egg, already more than \$800,000, will give them an important head start in these districts.

Rocky Strength Grows

A FRESH DECLINE in New York Democrats' confidence that they can beat Gov. Nelson Rockefeller this November was caused by the failure of their candidates to win the Manhattan congressional by-election last Tuesday. Rockefeller is still low in the polls but there is no longer much talk that he won't run and the Democrats suspect that he is gaining strength as the two big issues against him, his divorce and his preoccupation with the presidential nomination, recede into the background.